



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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RUS102355.E

Russia: Documentation required to obtain the new internal passport; whether individuals must trade in the older internal passport models to obtain a new one (2006 - March 2007)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Documentation required to obtain a new internal passport

The annex to the Interior Ministry Order No. 605 On the Approval of the Instruction on the Procedure of Issue, Replacement, Registration and Storage of Passports of Citizens of the Russian Federation (Order Number 605) dated 15 September 1997, specifies those documents that must be submitted in order to obtain a new internal passport (Russia 15 Sept. 1997, Art. 15). According to Article 15 of the annex, a citizen should present the following documents to state authorities in order to replace a passport:

- A statement requesting the issue or replacement of a passport, using application form N 1P;
- The passport that is to be replaced;
- Two black and white photographs measuring 35 by 45 millimetres;
- Documents proving the existence of one of the reasons for the replacement of the passport indicated in Article 8, paragraphs 3, 4 and 6 of the annex. (ibid.)

Article 8 of the annex stipulates that a passport can be replaced in the following cases:

Paragraph 3: Change of name, last name, patronymic, date of birth or place of birth;

Paragraph 4: Change of sex;

Paragraph 6: Inaccuracy or mistake in the information written in the passport. (ibid., Art. 8)

Information on any possible amendments to Order Number 605 of 15 September 1997 or any new laws that would replace this order could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, the Web sites of two local governments (Arkhangelsk Municipality and the District of Khanty-Mansiysk) provide the same requirements concerning the documents to be submitted for passport replacements (Arkhangelsk 5 May 2006; Khanty-Mansiysk n.d.).

Requirement to surrender previous passport

Article 30.6 of Order Number 605 stipulates that when handing over a new passport to a citizen, the passport clerk must return all the documents that were required to obtain the passport, except the passport that is being replaced and passport receipt (Russia 15 Sept. 1997, Art. 30.6).

There were conflicting reports among the sources consulted on the validity of Soviet-era passports. Despite previous legislation stipulating that Soviet-era internal passports would become invalid as of July 2004 (*Rossiyskaya Gazeta* 27 Jan. 2004; Russia 15 Feb. 2007), several media sources reported on a 2006 Supreme Court decision that recognized the validity of Soviet model internal passports (Russkie.org 24 Apr. 2006; Lenta.ru 26 Apr. 2006; *Vremya Novostey* 26 Apr. 2006). According to these sources, in April 2006, the Supreme Court ruled that Soviet-era internal passports were valid and could continue to prove the bearer's identity (Russkie.org 24 Apr. 2006; Lenta.ru 26 Apr. 2006; *Vremya Novostey* 26 Apr. 2006) and that there is no specific expiry date for these passports (*Novye Izvestiya* 28 Sept. 2006; Russkie.org 24 Apr. 2006).

At the same time, the Court supported the position of the Ministry of the Interior which obliges every Russian citizen to carry an internal passport of the Russian Federation (*Vremya Novostey* 26 Apr. 2006). As such, Russian citizens who carry a Soviet-era internal passport will also be required to carry an internal passport from the Russian Federation, even if they habitually use their Soviet passport (Lenta.ru 26 Apr. 2006; Russkie.org 24 Apr. 2006). According to the online newspaper Lenta.ru, many Russian citizens do not have passports of the Russian Federation (26 Apr. 2006). Some people are unsatisfied with the new passports' failure to incorporate an indication of the bearer's ethnicity; others cite religious objections, reportedly considering some patterns on the new passport to be the "signs of the Satan" (Lenta.ru 26 Apr. 2006).

In September 2006, an article appearing in the Moscow daily, *Novye Izvestiya*, reported that two women from Stavropol successfully sued the local Passport and Visa Service Department for failing to replace the photographs in their Soviet-era passports, as they had reached the age of 45 (28 Sept. 2006). The women refused to exchange their Soviet internal passports for new Russian Federation passports because they claimed that the latter passport contained the sign of Satan, 666 (*Novye Izvestiya* 28 Sept. 2006). The court found the women's concerns reasonable, and allowed them to continue using their previous passports (ibid.). At the same time, the Federal Migration Service cautioned the women not to visit other regions, since other police forces would not recognize their Soviet-era passports (ibid.). Further or corroborating information on this case could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within time constraints.

However, in a 15 February 2007 telephone interview with the Research Directorate, a consular official at the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Ottawa stated that Soviet model passports have been invalid since July 2004, and that any Supreme Court decision might only have referred to an individual case and therefore might not be widely implemented. Further or corroborating information on the validity of Soviet era passports, however, could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Arkhangelsk Municipality. 5 May 2006. "Informatsionno-raschetnyy tsentr." <<http://www.arhcity.ru/?page=200/6>> [Accessed 15 Feb. 2007]

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Vremya Novostey [Moscow, in Russian]. 26 April 2006. Ekaterina Butorina. "No grazhdaninom byt' obyazan." <<http://www.vremya.ru/print/150730.html>> [Accessed 14 Feb. 2007]

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, including: European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Factiva, *Moscow Times*,

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), World News Connection (WNC).

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